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EIS000775

Ms. Wendy R. Dixon, EIS Project Manager
M/S 010
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Ms. Dixon:

We have completed our review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada. We are responding on behalf of the U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

Technical assistance for this review was provided by Dr. Felix Rogers, Radiation Studies Branch, Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please consider the attached comments provided by Dr. Rogers. In general, the DEIS addressed public health issues regarding transportation and storage of nuclear waste materials, with one exception. The attached comments addresses health and safety of public employees who are known as "first responders."

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this DEIS. Please send us a copy of the Final DEIS, and any future environmental impact statements which may indicate potential public health impact and are developed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Holt, MSEH
Chemical Demilitarization Branch (F16)
Emergency & Environmental Health Services Division
National Center for Environmental Health

Attachment

Memo:

To: Ken Holt, CDB, EEHS, NCEH

From: J Felix Rogers, RSB, EHHE, NCEH

Re: Draft EIS, Yucca Mountain High Level Nuclear Waste Repository

1 The draft EIS has sufficiently addressed public health issues regarding transportation and storage of nuclear waste materials. However, one point seems to have evaded the discussion of the health and safety of public employees who are known as 'first responders.'

Transportation Accidents, Page J-52

2 In reading the section describing transportation, accidents I failed to identify any description of how first responders to potential accidents would be notified of the potential life threatening exposures they would be in contact with. Associated with the transportation accident scenario should be some information or plan regarding how states would be notified that shipments of highly radioactive material will be entering a state and passing through. In addition, first responders in such states should be notified and be on alert for potential exposure to radioactive material in case of an accident. 'First responders' should be added to the list of maximally exposed individuals on page J-43, Section J.1.3.2.2., with appropriate calculation of potential exposures (person-rem, dose-risk) added to appropriate tables throughout Chapter 6, Environmental Impacts of Transportation.

2... Section J.1.2.2, page J-23 states that the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management plans to identify the preliminary routes for shipments of waste and notify governors and tribal leaders. It may be appropriate for the OCRWM to take responsibility to notify appropriate authorities regarding 'first responder' safety.